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SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Jensen, your light is next.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I just wanted to mention that there have now been over 100 studies showing that raising cigarette taxes does reduce consumption, over 100 studies. The CDC, many national studies have confirmed that. I just want to relate, and there was some talk about this is going to increase Internet sales. But in the state of California, after a 50-cent per pack increase in California, the Department of Health and Human Services study, released December 26, just last year, found that the tax evasion through other sales outlets were minimal. Overall, only 5.4 percent, plus or minus 8 percent, of California smokers avoided the new excise tax by purchasing cigarettes via methods not covered by the tax. Internet sales, .4 percent; military commissaries, 1.9 percent; Indian reservations, .3 percent; and then out-of-state purchases, 3 percent. Very few teens even attempt to purchase cigarettes on-line. A 2001 study in California high schoolers and tobacco control research journal revealed that only 2.2 percent of high schoolers had ever tried to purchase cigarettes via the Internet. The tobacco control...a California study showed that teens were more likely to purchase cigarettes as a convenience items at local stores, if they could. Also, look what other states are doing right now. South Dakota, current tax is 33 cents, they are considering 44 cents for this coming year; Iowa, are considering a 50-cent tax increase; Kansas, 65-cent increase for 2002; Missouri, 75-cent increase. A 30-cent increase in...in tax is minimal. It's the bottom line. I...I would just urge the body to consider that. But more than anything, just consider the health of Nebraskans. Consider those lives that we can save if teenagers never start smoking in the first place. Consider the Medicaid costs that we're going to be alleviating in the future if citizens do not pick up tobacco-related diseases. Consider, even your own family members, that you could help by alleviating this smoking problem. I would again...once again, just urge the body to adopt the 30-cent tax, for 2 years going into the General Fund; after that it goes into the Healthcare Cash Fund. Thank you.